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ABSTRACT

This essay shows how the construction of literature curricula and the study of literature can contribute to civic education. The paper describes the anti-civic forces now at work in literature programs in U.S. schools and explains why these forces exist. The report suggests how literature programs can strengthen the underpinnings of a constitutional democracy centered on individual rights and a concept of personal responsibility. The programs can combat the anti-civic forces while at the same time honoring the essence of literary study, which is the teaching of literature as literature. The paper uses chiefly U.S. and British literary works to illustrate the suggestions but advocates educators in other countries use literature of their countries to support civic education and clarify civic education goals. (EH)

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by Sandra Stotsky

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Citizenship Education and the Teaching of Literature: Lessons and Suggestions from the American Experience

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Paper Presented at the
International Seminar on Education and Citizenship
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Abstract

To develop effective programs for civic education in the schools today, educators must confront in some countries a deepening hostility to the inculcation of a national, or civic, identity in any form. Much of this hostility emanates from those who espouse something called "cultural democracy," or what has recently been called "illiberal multiculturalism." This form of multiculturalism may be described as an effort to "close young people off into identities already ascribed to them" and to make them think that they bear no personal responsibility for their thinking or behavior because--so the illiberal multiculturalist claims--both are determined by their "culture" or their "race, ethnicity, or gender."

In drawing on the various academic disciplines in the school curriculum for their programs in civic education, civic educators in most countries have tended to overlook literary study for its potential contribution to civic education, both to strengthen it and to address these anti-civic forces. The purpose of this essay is to show how the construction of literature curricula and the study of literature can contribute to these goals. In this essay, I first describe the anti-civic forces now at work in literature programs in American schools and explain why these forces exist. I then suggest how literature programs can strengthen the underpinnings of a constitutional democracy centered on individual rights and a concept of personal responsibility and combat these anti-civic forces while at the same time honoring the essence of literary study (that is, the teaching of literature as literature). Although I use chiefly American and British literary works to illustrate my suggestions, educators in other countries can draw on the literature of their own countries to support civic education and to combat these anti-civic forces provided they are clear about what they are trying to accomplish.

Purpose

Those who seek to develop effective programs for civic education in the schools must confront a myriad of social issues today--far more than they have had to contend with in the past. In some countries, authentic civic education was non-existent; their forms of government were not based on the principles, values, and practices associated with a liberal constitutional democracy--those principles, values, and practices that cultivate the primacy of a people's civic identity or sense of membership in its civic communities. In such countries, there are few if any public institutions or procedures in place to provide external support and concrete meaning for their current efforts in civic education. In other countries, civic educators must deal with a legacy of highly nationalistic beliefs and informal practices that, overtly or implicitly, privilege as citizens only members of

particular ethnic, racial, or religious groups and that denigrate or create hostility to other groups of people, whether or not they are in their midsts (sometimes as citizens). In yet other countries, civic educators have to confront a deepening hostility to the inculcation of a national, or civic, identity in any form; much of this hostility emanates from those who espouse something called "cultural democracy," or what Anthony Appiah calls "illiberal multiculturalism" in an essay review in tbe October 9, 1997 issue of the New York Review of Books.[1] In these and other countries as well, civic educators must now address not only the usual problems of student motivation but also the anti-civic forces in the school curriculum arising from this illiberal form of multiculturalism--the effort, in Appiah's words, to "close young people off into identities already ascribed to them" or, in my words, to make them think that they bear no personal responsibility for their thinking or behavior because--so the illiberal multiculturalist claims--both are determined by their "culture."

In developing programs for civic education to address these various social issues or anti-civic forces, civic educators tend to draw on certain academic disciplines for the content of their programs: usually political science, political philosophy, sociology, social psychology, economics, history, and jurisprudence, although not necessarily all of them in any one country. The one discipline they tend to overlook for its potential contribution to civic education, both to strengthen it and to address these social issues--is literary study. Yet, the National Standards for Civics and Government, a widely praised document specifying what K-12 students should know and be able to do in civics and government courses in the U.S., notes that achievement of the standards should be fostered in related subjects, including literature.[2]

A decade ago, I began to explore the contribution of literary study to civic education. What had other scholars written on the topic? And what was taking place in literature programs in U.S. schools? To my surprise, I could find only one literary scholar who clearly saw a relationship between the particular works that Americans read and the development of those attitudes, concepts, and values required for the preservation of the American experiment in self-government. In his preface to Jeffersonianism and the American Novel, published in 1966, Howard Mumford Jones observed that in our political culture, the adult American is understood to be "a being capable of both rational and moral choice."[3] Upon this assumption, he wrote, "the republic rests." And yet, in his survey of American novels of the twentieth century, Jones found that this view of the individual as an autonomous moral being had been, if not obliterated, then seriously weakened. Jones was not looking at what was in the school curriculum, however, only at the contribution twentieth century American writers were making to the republic of letters from a civic perspective.

In my explorations of what is in the literature curriculum today, I have found not just the near disappearance of a portrait of the average American as a rational, decent human being. I have found a strong expression of all the anti-civic tendencies associated with illiberal multiculturalism.[4] In my remarks today, I will of necessity use the U.S. experience to describe the anti-civic forces

now at work in the literature curriculum and to explain why they exist. The ultimate purpose of this essay is to suggest how literature programs can honor the essence of literary study (that is, the teaching of literature as literature) and at the same time strengthen the underpinnings of a constitutional democracy centered on individual rights and a concept of personal responsibility as well as combat the anti-civic forces in the curriculum emanating from illiberal multiculturalism. I will also use examples from chiefly American and British literature to illustrate my suggestions, although the literature of any country, I believe, can be drawn on as support for civic education provided the teacher is clear as to what he or she is trying to accomplish.

To explain these anti-civic forces in our school literature programs and why they exist, we need to look first at the purposes and content for literary study at the time it became a subject in American schools and note how they evolved in the twentieth century. Contrary to a dominant academic myth, literature was not taught for ideological purposes throughout most of the twentieth century, nor was there ever a literary canon in the curriculum if by canon we mean a fixed body of works taught from generation to generation. This myth has been used by those who now seek to use literature for ideological purposes, to exploit or remove from the curriculum altogether all the works now in it that do not lend themselves to ideological uses, and to install as a canon what they want students to read in their place.

Literary Study at the Secondary Level in the Nineteenth Century

Until about the turn of the 20th century, secondary students usually studied individual literary works or excerpts as part of lessons in reading, composition, or public speaking. When literature was studied for its own sake, it tended to be accompanied by study of the history of literature, often with much more attention paid to the history than to the literature. Generally, textbooks were organized chronologically, dealing first with the life and works of the author, and then presenting long extracts or whole poems from the author's writings, together with brief literary "thought gems" to be committed to memory. At the time literary study became a high school subject in its own right at the beginning of the 20th century, cultural content evolved from classical works to chiefly English literature, with some American literature taught as a separate subject.

The study of English and American literature became a full-fledged subject in the secondary curriculum after the Committee of Ten, a group of distinguished college presidents and secondary school headmasters, set forth its educational priorities for all subjects in the nation's secondary schools in 1893.[5] The objectives of English study, according to its subcommittee on English, were "to enable the pupil to understand the expressed thoughts of others and to give expression to thoughts of his own" and "to cultivate a taste for reading, to give the pupil some acquaintance with good literature and to furnish him with the means of extending that acquaintance."[6] It assigned to English teachers the task of not only providing students with good literature, but also motivating

them to want to read it, even when their school days were over. It called for the reading of whole works and denounced manuals of literary history. It warned that the " committing to memory of names and dates should not be mistaken for culture."[7] The subcommittee recommended that some books be read in class, others "cursorily," that students give written and oral reports in their reading, and that time be given to discussion in the classroom. It suggested the parallel study of some works as well. It vigorously favored one English course for all students, no matter where bound; it saw "no excuse" for a two- or three-track system.

Influenced by the Committee of Ten's recommendations and by changes in the college entrance examinations, high schools began to introduce contemporary works such as those by Charles Dickens and George Eliot. More important, literary study became a regular subject in the high school curriculum, necessitating the use of literature anthologies to help teachers with the task of providing their students with good literature three periods a week, every week for the entire school year, and for four continuous years. The emphasis shifted almost completely from a study of the lives and works of great writers to the actually reading of their works.

In a collection of essays and addresses published in 1898, the purposes for literary study were again articulated by Charles William Eliot, the President of Harvard University and the chairman of the Committee of Ten. What is important here is that he placed them in the context of the object of democratic education. As Eliot saw it, the aim of democratic education was "to lift the whole population to a higher plane of intelligence, conduct, and happiness..."[8] "From education," he stated, "there should result in the child a taste for interesting and improving reading, which should direct and inspire its subsequent intellectual life." "That schooling," he went on, "which results in this taste for good reading...has achieved a main end of elementary education."[9]

Driving this concern for developing taste in reading was a particular view of "culture," a term with many meanings then and now. As one scholar of this period notes, "culture" could refer "in an Emersonian sense to the possession of broad sympathies and varied interests, or to a set of carefully inculcated values, moral as well as aesthetic, or, increasingly after 1850 to something one acquired, much like other conspicuous possessions, as a mark of social status."[10] Literary study was recommended to be a required high school subject by the educational reformers because they believed that an interest in reading widely, a familiarity with literary masterpieces, and the capacity to make judgments about what was good or inferior writing were characteristics of a cultured person and thus the appropriate aims of a literary education.

This educational philosophy heavily influenced the stated purposes of literature anthologies used in American high schools from the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth, regardless of the literature in them or the pedagogical approach. In 44 English literature textbooks published between mid-nineteenth century to mid-twentieth century, the aim most frequently mentioned was the development of literary taste--helping students learn how to choose

the best reading materials.[11] Other aims mentioned encompassed the development of an appreciation of great literary masterpieces, the enjoyment of reading good literature, the tracing of literary changes, the building of mental discipline, and laying the foundation for future study. In 66 American literature textbooks published from 1870 to 1952, the aims most frequently mentioned included the development of "culture," the relationship of literature to history, and the enjoyment of good literature.[12]

I point out these aims because a tension between two general groups of aims seems to have existed from the very beginning of literary study in this country. Many educators have always had grand objectives for students--an appreciation of great literary works, a capacity to discern good literature from "trash" once they left school, an improved moral character, a life-long interest in reading literature, and, for some students, the possibility of contributing to the development of American letters.[13] But other educators have had more limited and immediate objectives. They saw literary study useful for helping students acquire a veneer of "culture," for developing skills in reading, writing, and speaking, or for providing the discipline and background necessary for advanced or post-secondary study. Despite the intrinsic appeal of the first set of objectives to most teachers of literature, practical concerns have almost always led the schools to put a premium on short-term rewards and limited goals.[14] The fundamental concern for those who have viewed the teaching of literature as a humanizing and morally elevating experience has been the abuse that literature has suffered whenever it has been used in an academic setting for an ulterior motive, whether to prepare students for college or to advance a particular ideology. Indeed, they feared that the use of literature as a means to an end, rather than as an end in itself, was inherent in an academic setting; teachers must have something to teach to justify their existence.[15] Little could they have suspected in the first half of the 20th century the ulterior purposes for which literature would be used in the last decades of the 20th century.

Changes in Cultural Content of Major Works Taught in the 20th Century

Dramatic changes took place in the major titles read by secondary school students from the beginning of the 20th century to the most recent decade. The first survey in this century to present tabled information was conducted for the English profession by George Tanner and published in 1907.[16] Tanner reported on information he gathered from 67 high schools, grades 9 to 12, in the Middle West. The list he compiled was heavily British; of the 40 most frequently assigned works, only 9 are by American authors. There were few contemporary works on the list, whether essays, poems, plays, or novels.

Three recent surveys of major works read in American secondary schools clearly show how much has changed since the beginning of the century. In 1964, Scarvia Anderson reported the results of a nation-wide survey undertaken by the Educational Testing Service.[17] Of the top 42 works assigned by 5% or more of public schools, grades 7-12 (in 222 representative schools and

7121 classrooms in these schools), 18 authors are American. Many have adolescent protagonists (e.g., Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, Charles Dicken's Great Expectations, Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird, John Steinbeck's The Pearl, Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island, Marjorie Kinnan Rawling's The Yearling, and Esther Forbes's Johnny Tremain), in part a reflection of the literature used in grades 7 and 8. We also find a number of works featuring a woman as a central focus or character (e.g., Besier's The Barretts of Wimpole Street, Longfellow's Evangeline, Bronte's Jane Eyre, Rodgers and Hammerstein's The King and I, Austin's Pride and Prejudice, Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer, Shaw's Pygmalion, and Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter). Some of these works are distinctly contemporary (e.g., The Pearl, The Yearling, To Kill a Mockingbird). Only 12 of these 42 titles are on Tanner's 1907 list, although there are more works by Shakespeare and Dickens on the 1964 list than on the 1907 list.

In a nation-wide survey of 322 representative schools in 1989, researcher Arthur Applebee found that 26 of the top 43 titles in 5% or more of public schools, grades 7 to 12, are by Americans.[18] About 20 reflect contemporary life, and except for George Orwell's 1984 and Animal Farm, and William Golding's Lord of the Flies, they are all by Americans. As with Anderson's list, many of these works have adolescents as protagonists. Of interest is that only four of these titles are on Tanner's 1907 list.

Despite differences in methodology and in the question each study asked, a survey sponsored by the New England Association of Teachers of English (NEATE) in 1990 turned up results very similar to Applebee's.[19] The information in the NEATE survey came from secondary school members of this organization who had responded to a questionnaire asking them what ten well-known and ten less well-known titles they would recommend to their colleagues based on their own experience in teaching these works. Of special interest here is that only five of the top 45 works recommended by these secondary English teachers are on Tanner's 1907 list. And 29 are by American authors.

Changes in Cultural Content of Literature Anthologies in the 20th Century

Not surprisingly, the cultural changes in literature anthologies paralleled those in the major works studied in the schools. A survey published in 1963 by James Lynch and Bertrand Evans, two professors of English, gives us a base with which to compare changes in content since then.[20] Lynch and Evans examined 72 literature anthologies for grades 9 to 12 published between 1949 and 1961, analyzing almost every textbook that they found in use, including series designed for less able readers. They approached their analysis with the philosophy that literature anthologies "should be the repositories of the very best ever thought and written in the spirit of the humanistic tradition and the Anglo-American heritage."[21] Table 1, which is adapted from their book, shows the distribution of the contents of these 72 anthologies according to the nationality of the author.[22]

Table 1: Distribution of Contents of 72 Anthologies in Lynch and Evans (1963) According to the Nationality of the Author (in percentages)

Grade	American	English	Foreign (in translation)	Classical (Greek/Roman)
Ninth	75.6	15.6	7.9	0.9
Tenth	71.4	18.0	8.6	2.0
Eleventh	98.4	0.4	1.2	0.0
Twelfth	9.4	68.8	19.6	2.2

As Table 1 shows, the vast majority of selections were by American authors by mid-century, with less than 10% from non-British foreign sources. Among their chief concerns, Lynch and Evans noted the excessive reliance upon "a spate of nonliterary, nonfictional, 'informational' materials more suitable at their best to the daily newspaper..." and the almost total absence in grades 9 and 10 of "literature written before 1930, to say nothing of before 1900." Table 2, adapted from their book, shows the distribution of content according to date (in percentages). Noting the stated purpose of many of these anthologies, Lynch and Evans pointed out rather caustically that "an acquaintance with "Our Cultural Heritage"...remains little more than a promise when the anthologies for half the high school course in literature almost completely ignore all literature old enough to have become part of anyone's heritage." [23]

Judging that large quantities of writing in these anthologies were "mediocre, trivial, or dated," Lynch and Evans proposed that in conjunction with "faulty criteria for selection" the "restrictive" effect of many of the organizing schemes within the anthologies--in particular, topical organization--was the major reason for the presence of such selections. Topical organization, they observed, could contain little or no literature. It "put literature in a subordinate position"--for use for non-literary purposes. The function of literature, they asserted, is not bibliotherapeutic. Nor is its function to treat sociological topics. A work of literature, they declared flatly, "is not a social tract. Nor is it intended to inculcate virtue--whether social or personal--by teaching it directly. The basic function of literature as they expressed it is to "humanize," not to "socialize." Nevertheless, despite their warning about choosing and using literature to inculcate social virtue and about the unsuitability of using topics drawn from the social sciences as organizing schemes for literature anthologies, the anti-literary tendencies they spotted in the selection criteria and organizational schemes in these post-World War II anthologies did not diminish.

Table 2: Distribution of Contents in 72 Anthologies in Lynch and Evans (1963) According to Date (in percentages)

Grade	Pre-Twentieth Century	Twentieth Century
Ninth	24.6	75.4

Tenth	26.6	73.4
Eleventh	47.2	52.8
Twelfth	65.0	35.0

A survey of literature anthologies by Applebee in 1991 analyzed the seven leading series of literature anthologies for grades 7 to 12 copyrighted in 1989. Applebee found unchanged the America-centered curriculum apparent in the anthologies examined by Lynch and Evans. From grade 7 to grade 10, selections by British writers ranged from 12% to 20%, while between 68% and 79% of the selections for grades 7 to 10 were by authors whose "place of origin" is "North America."[24] Moreover, the dates for the selections in grades 9 and 10 in the Applebee study did not differ by much from those in the Lynch and Evans study, although, as Table 3 shows, the past had disappeared a little more by 1989. Table 3, based on one of Applebee's tables, also shows that the balance between the twentieth and pre-twentieth centuries in grade 11, where American literature is usually taught chronologically, remains identical to that in the Lynch and Evans study.

However, we face a curious problem in interpreting Applebee's percentages on authors because his study did not make clear why he chose to substitute "place of origin" for "nationality of author," the descriptive term in the Lynch and Evans study, and what he meant by "North America." The North American continent is generally understood to include Mexico and Canada, the first a Spanish-speaking country, and the second a country with a large French-speaking population. Thus, Applebee's percentages are not necessarily comparable to Lynch and Evans's.

Table 3. Distribution of Contents in 28 Anthologies in Applebee (1989) According to Date (in percentages)

Grade	Pre-Twentieth Century	Twentieth Century
Ninth	23.6	76.4
Tenth	21.7	78.3
Eleventh	47.2	52.8
Twelfth	73.2	26.8

In any event, we do see in Applebee's survey the characteristics of the selections in the anthologies that appear to be of greatest interest to him--and to the academic audience to which he is writing--the color and gender of the author. He notes that "over the past 30 years, literature anthologies have broadened their selections to include a wider representation of works by women and of works from alternative literary traditions" and that it is particularly true in the volumes intended for use in grades 7 to 10. His results indicate that, in the anthologies for grades 7 and 8, about 21% of the authors are nonwhite (these are the authors who are considered to reflect

"alternative literary traditions"), while 30% of the authors are female. Overall, he reports, between 26% and 30% of the selections in the anthologies for grades 7 to 10 were written by women.

The results of all these surveys clearly indicate the shift over the twentieth century from a predominantly British curriculum to a predominantly American one. The surveys document the fact that changes began before mid-century, showing that English teachers, like all responsible professionals, continuously updated their literature programs. By the 1960s, to judge from Anderson's survey, almost half of the top 40 or so titles were by Americans. The surveys also suggest the extent to which changes continued to be made to these mid-century changes. Only 18 of the 43 titles on Applebee's 1989 survey are on Anderson's list (a change of 68%), while only 16 of the 45 books on the NEATE survey are on Anderson's list (a change of 64%). Finally, we see in the results of the NEATE survey the beginnings of the movement to include works with ethnic content as part of American literature. What is perhaps most remarkable about the cultural shift from a British-oriented curriculum to an America-centered one over the course of the twentieth century is that it seems to be virtually unremarked upon in the academic world and in the professional literature for English teachers. University educators have apparently been too busy denouncing an unchanging "Eurocentric" canon in the school curriculum to notice.

We can also see in our literary history a shift in what is considered important in a literature curriculum. What was of great concern in Lynch and Evans study seems to be of least concern in Applebee's study--the quality of the literary selections themselves. His study has almost nothing to say about what might still appear to many English teachers to be of paramount importance. This is an important part, but only one part, of the trade-off that seems to have taken place in the editorial thinking behind the selections in some current literature anthologies.

Forces for Change in Recent Decades

What impelled so many of the changes in content in school literature programs in the past three decades? One major reason for the focus on the color and gender of the author can be clearly seen in the table of contents for a leading anthology published in 1964. I use this anthology only as an example, as the situation can be generalized to the other anthologies in use at the time. In this 700 page anthology,[25] which could have been used in grade 9 or 10, there is only one selection by a black American--six pages from Booker T. Washington's autobiography describing his struggle for an education. Only fourteen selections are by women, and most are poems. It is against a background of almost complete neglect of female writers and writers from America's racial and ethnic subgroups in particular that we must understand the changes in the contents of literature anthologies not only in the 30 years between the Lynch and Evans study and Applebee's survey, but also in the years following 1989.

Both positive and negative forces have fueled these needed changes in the past 30 years. The positive push has come from those appealing to the generous sympathies that most American

educators have always had for the underdog and to the genuine interest the best teachers have always had in extending their knowledge of our own and other cultures. During the 1960s and 1970s, many English educators began to urge recognition and inclusion of racial and ethnic literature in the school curriculum on the grounds that a course called American Literature misled students about the nature and content of American writing if it did not do so. As the co-authors of a report of the 1987 English Coalition Conference suggested, students "should be invited to read deeply in our diverse literary traditions, including writing by men and women of many racial, ethnic, and cultural groups."[26] If the criterion was good literature, they and others argued, then many authors from American ethnic groups deserved recognition on that basis alone. More literature from countries all around the world was also recommended on the grounds that greater knowledge of the world was needed. As the co-authors of a textbook for English educators stated, we needed "to recognize that no country or part of the world has a monopoly on literature; that quite often English and American literature is indebted, in one way or another, to Continental, Near Eastern, and Far Eastern literature."[27]

Unfortunately, the positive message conveyed by civilized voices has been completely drowned out in the past two decades by the withering sarcasm of other "educators" who chose to use divisive strategies based on differences in gender and race to make their case. They have regularly applied political labels and a political cast to any attempt at counter-argument to what they had arbitrarily decided was just. In so doing, they created an intimidating environment in which educators with any reservations or questions about the directions urged by the most radical of these sarcastic and negative voices became reluctant to articulate in public any critique at all when they felt that compensation for past neglect might have gone beyond reasonable civic considerations and was no longer compensatory in spirit.

As an example of the divisive strategies and the sarcasm used by those promoting changes in the literature curriculum in the past few decades, we need look no further than the comments of three English "educators" in four reviews of the leading literature anthologies published in 1989. In all four reviews, published between 1989 and 1991 in the leading journal for secondary school English teachers, the reviewers consistently expressed their animus against works written by "dead writers" or, as they were called in one review, "DOWGs" ("dead old white guys).[28] Literary selections written by "DOWGs," they declared, will not "inspire students to learn nor teachers to teach and learn." In their view, writers should be able to speak "directly to the experience of many adolescents" and to "concerns that adolescents are likely to have in the 1990s." In fact, students "must be empowered to make and respect their own decisions about what they read."

The reviewers' assumption is clear: once an author dies, his works no longer have anything to say to contemporary adolescents, especially if the dead writer was a male. Instead of making a positive case for the works of those living writers they believed deserved to be anthologized, they

chose mostly to attack the dead. They complained that "nearly half of the poets among the recent literature selections [in the grade 11 anthology in one series] were dead" and saw this "homage to the dead" continuing in its grade 12 anthology. They even scorned the recent dead who in some cases speak from "alternative literary traditions" themselves, despite being "white." For example, the reviewers described Bernard Malamud (a Jewish-American writer) and Harry Mark Petrakis (a Greek-American writer) as the "most geriatric" short-story writers in a grade 11 anthology.[29] On the other hand, in the same review, they praised the inclusion of a "deeply moving letter by Bartolomeo Vanzetti on the eve of his execution"--a nice example of hypocrisy. That Vanzetti was also very dead and a white male did not seem to matter when the writer's message had a political cast that suited the reviewers.

Not only do authors seem to become irrelevant upon death, they also automatically enter the ranks of conservatism--unfortunately, a fate no author can ultimately prevent no matter how radical his thought in his lifetime. A poetry section in one anthology was scorned for its "conservative list of authors" precisely because it contained few "living" authors. In all four reviews, the epithet "conservative" is regularly applied to any anthology or any section of an anthology with too many dead writers to suit the reviewers' taste. A twelfth grade text that included George Herbert was called "a study in conservatism." Anthologies for grade 11 and 12, the only two years of literary study that must include the past, were almost consistently criticized for not including enough of the present, even though the present has always been amply provided for in the other ten years. The existence of a "canon" was also regularly claimed but in a puzzling way. One anthology was criticized for reflecting "the literary canon as seen in the 1950s,"[30] another for reflecting the "canon as it existed in the 1960s,"[31] implicitly raising the question of how a "canon" that changed every decade could still be called a "canon."

Altogether, these reviews make clear that the quality of literary selections in the anthologies was as of little interest to these reviewers as it seemed to be to Applebee. The color, gender, and vital signs of the authors are for them, apparently, the critical features of the selections. There is nothing to suggest that a love for reading, development of taste, and a broad acquaintance with literary masterpieces from our own and other cultures matter. In this approach to the curriculum, we find the full context for the anti-civic forces at work.

Multicultural Literature: The Literary Source of Anti-Civic Education

What are the sources of anti-civic education in the literature curriculum today? One is the exclusion of this country's genuine diversity from the curriculum, and the corresponding attempt to create a sense of a monolithic white population. Clearly, no reasonable person can quarrel with the notion that students should be able to read good literature by or about members of different social groups in their country as part of their school programs. And few educators in the U.S. did when the case was made in the late 1960s; the early advocates of multicultural literature claimed to seek

inclusion, not exclusion. Although its chief focus was, understandably, black literature, other American ethnic groups were included as well, the specific ones depending on author or publisher or classroom teacher. This was certainly the case in anthologies of ethnic literature offered by educational and non-educational publishers. While works by black writers were almost always featured in these compilations, they also tended to include literature about Irish Americans, Jewish Americans, and Italian Americans. (See, for example, The Outnumbered, edited by Charlotte Brooks for Dell in 1967; Speaking for Ourselves, edited by Lillian Faderman and Barbara Bradshaw for Scott Foresman in 1969; Minorities All, edited by Gerald Leinwand for Washington Square Press in 1971; A Gathering of Ghetto Writers: Irish, Italian, Jewish, Black, and Puerto Rican, edited by Wayne Miller for New York University Press in 1972; The Immigrant Experience: The Anguish of Becoming American, edited by Thomas Wheeler for Penguin Books in 1972; and Ethnic Writers in America, edited by Myron Simon for Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in 1972.)

At the time, ethnicity was not coextensive with race, the ethnic experience (except for blacks and native Americans) was understood as an immigrant experience, this experience quite visibly included the experiences of European ethnic groups, and the ethnic or immigrant experience was seen as a transitional experience as newcomers became acculturated as Americans. However, when the shift from the term "minority" to "multicultural" began in the 1970s, it coincided with the notion that the ethnic or immigration experience should not be, and should not be seen as, a transition into the American mainstream. The illiberal ideology that began to develop at this time in its essence served to undermine civic sensibilities by its elevation of race, ethnicity, and gender as the determinants of individual thought and behavior.

That is one reason why, by the mid 1990s, the immigrant experience of European ethnic groups is almost non-existent in both high school literature anthologies as well as the elementary school reading series, and "diversity" consists of a few common categories despite occasional hints at real diversity. For example, Scott Foresman has put out an anthology called Multicultural Voices that it recommends as an elective supplement to its literature anthology series for grades 7 to 12.[32] Although the four-page brochure describing it states that the anthology "celebrates the immense diversity of American culture" and includes recent works by "Americans of varied cultural backgrounds--African, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, European, and Middle Eastern," this description is highly misleading. Almost all the works are by members of the four affirmative action categories, and there is exactly one work about an identifiable European ethnic group--"The Wooing of Ariadne" by Harry Mark Petrakis. It is so remarkably unique that it stands out like a sore thumb in this collection. One can't help wondering if one of the editors at Scott Foresman was a Greek American and on principle insisted that "the immense diversity of American culture" should include at least one work reflecting his or her ethnic background. On the other

hand, the editors of an anthology entitled Multicultural Perspectives, published by McDougal, Littell as part of its Responding to Literature Series, have made a clean sweep of European ethnic groups--a sort of literary ethnic cleansing, if you will--apparently deciding that only members of the four affirmative action categories have retained their "cultural identities" and have "unique heritages" that can strengthen and enrich America.[33]

Multiculturalism has come to conceptualize diversity in very narrow terms not only within this country but outside its boundaries as well. For its Elements of Literature series, Holt Rinehart and Winston lists five major groups: one includes African American with African, Caribbean, Haitian, and/or Nigerian; a second includes Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Chilean, Dominican American, Colombian, and/or Spanish; a third is labeled Asian; and a fourth Native American. The fifth is called "Other"--the only category that indicates a few ethnic groups other than those in the four affirmative action categories, and with a label that hints at how all non-members of the four affirmative action categories in this country as well as European writers may soon be portrayed.

The battle over who's in and who's out is not over yet by a long shot, despite the seeming monopoly by the four affirmative action categories on the direction of the changes in ethnic content in our readers and literature anthologies. Whether peoples judged to be "of color" should be the chief or only ethnic groups featured in multicultural literary materials seems to be a prominent bone of contention among those who write books promoting multicultural literature. Dissension, as well as a lack of internal inconsistency, is quite visible in recent works for educators and librarians.

The exclusion of the authentic diversity of Americans from the literature curriculum is of serious concern because illiberal multiculturalism, unlike liberal multiculturalism, seeks to use the literature curriculum as the means to enhance the political power of groups that can in some way be viewed as non-European American middle-class. This motivation has led to the selection of texts for the literature curriculum that have little literary quality or are not literary in nature at all (such as family chronicles, ordinary diaries, or outright journalism). Selections are chosen on the basis of whether they help social groups considered "outside the socio-political mainstream of the United States"[34] achieve the privileged status of victim. And the demonization of the white population of this country, especially Protestant Americans, seems to have become the chief means for reducing the kind of power that they are perceived to have. Selections abound in classrooms today that portray members of racial minority groups as saints or as victims of white oppression, such as those in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye, Leslie Silko's Ceremony (about the problems of native Indians in contemporary America), or Jeanne Wakatsuki and James Houston's Farewell to Manzanar (about the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II). Thus, the second reason that European ethnic groups have generally disappeared from the literature (and history) curriculum and been lumped with white Protestant Americans is to make sure that prejudice is viewed in racial terms alone. Americans have been divided into five spurious races, with a race-

be some sort of official culture. Government has to go on in a small number of languages and is most easily conducted in one. For people to identify with the nation, they need some kind of public history, some national meanings, what Rousseau called a 'civil religion'." Quoting from Michael Walzer's latest work, he agrees that the "American liberal tradition, which constitutes the political core of our official culture...has its origins, at least, in Protestant and English history," and should require, for a multicultural education, "not the subtraction of the liberal story from the curriculum but the addition of other stories." But how the other stories get added to the curriculum is the crux of the matter today, and this critical problem Appiah doesn't address. He is right to say that there is no tension between a liberal multiculturalism and the requirements of liberal citizenship if these other stories do not force on each child "its "proper" identity. But if these stories inculcate scorn or hatred for those who belong to the Protestant or white majority and convey the notion that individual rights and the concept of individual responsibility for one's thinking and behavior are simply a facade behind which white dominance hides, then authentic civic education is subverted.

There are several ways in which literature programs can be constructed to maintain the teaching of literature as a humanizing and morally elevating experience and to strengthen the basis for liberal constitutional democracy and for American citizenship in particular. First, literature programs should be designed so that all students, regardless of ethnic or racial background, are exposed to the full range of ethnic and racial diversity in this country, thus undercutting the notion that the concept of diversity signals racial differences. This means including works about the European ethnic experience in America. There are fine literary works about almost every European ethnic group in America, as I have indicated in my essay in the American Educator. They address a variety of themes beyond those dealing with exploitation or discrimination, focus on the often complex relationships of one ethnic group to another as well as to the dominant culture, and can be meaningfully grouped with works about groups in the four affirmative action categories to show the frequent parallels in their assimilatory patterns over several generations. However, as Appiah implies, the shaping of children's cultural or religious identity should not be undertaken by public schools through the literature that is chosen for their classroom programs. That is their parents' responsibility. It is as important to separate ethnicity and state as it is to separate church and state.

Second, teachers should ensure that the literature by or about a variety of social groups is not chiefly "white guilt" (or white male guilt) literature. No student or group will benefit from a fairy-tale curriculum in which all non-white (or female) characters are virtuous and all white (or male) characters are bigoted, hateful, morally confused, alienated, or nihilistic. Such a literature program inevitably breeds contempt for the literature and a lack of sympathy for the "virtuous" groups. This also means that teachers are responsible for considering the possible moral, or rhetorical, effects of whatever is deemed a work of literature in judging its suitability for the K-12 classroom. Truly good literature rarely contains stock characters nor is didactic in intent, even

though there are some talented writers like Toni Morrison, for example, who can produce white guilt literature that passes literary muster in some critics' eyes.

Third, literature programs need to retain a central place for works in our literary and civic heritage, some of which come from classical sources, others from non-American and non-British sources, that can advance understanding of central civic concepts because they reflect clearly the values sustaining a liberal constitutional democracy--its legal principles and its political institutions. For example, the concept of civil disobedience and the acceptance of the legal penalty, as found in the writing of Henry David Thoreau, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Or the notion of a legal system that effectively protects the rights of individuals, as in Terrence Rattigan's The Winslow Boy and Jerome Lawrence and Robert Lee's Inherit the Wind, one a British play, the other American. Or the idea that individuals can maintain their integrity and still win, achieve, or live, as in Twain's Huckleberry Finn, Ayn Rand's The Fountainhead, or Romain Roland's Jean Christophe. Or the idea that one's integrity is worth maintaining even in the face of certain death, as in the Trial of Socrates, Antigone, and Robert Bolt's Man for all Seasons. Or such values as the work ethic, initiative, and self-reliance, as in Benjamin Franklin's autobiography and Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay on self-reliance. Or how cynicism or evil results when laws are corrupted or not observed, as in Clark's The Oxbow Incident or Di Lampedusa's The Leopard. Or the tensions and political power plays within a democracy that suggest how difficult it is to make it work, as in Robert Penn Warren's All the King's Men and Edwin O'Connor's The Last Hurrah. Or the elements of effective leadership in a democracy, as powerfully illustrated by Winston Churchill's speeches during World War II or by Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Fireside Chats.

Finally, to use good works of literature for the cause of civic education in perhaps the most powerful and productive way, I would recommend interdisciplinary approaches at the high school level that link philosophical readings (taught in either a philosophy or a humanities course) and important historical documents with appropriate literary works, each integrated set of readings illustrating the treatment of an important civic concept. For example, to highlight the use and abuse of power, one could link excerpts from Machiavelli, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer with such documents as The Federalist Papers and The Declaration of Independence and with such literary works as Animal Farm, Antigone, Oedipus Rex, All the King's Men, and Ayn Rand's Anthem. To address the nature of man, one could link selections from Locke, Rousseau, Mill, Jefferson, Plato's Republic, and Chapter 3 of Freud's Civilization and its Discontents with The Federalist Papers and with such literary works as The Bacchae, Lord of the Flies, Tennessee Williams's A Streetcar Named Desire, and Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness. Newer literary works, as well as works from other countries around the world, can always be brought into these sets of readings, expanding students' understanding of them in a larger historical and political context.

Concluding Remarks

complete precedence to the claims of often artificial communities--or, more precisely, to the demands of often self-appointed spokespersons--over those of the individual. Literature teachers have a prominent role to play in the development of our individual uniqueness and our common humanity, and they will find resources in their own national literature as well is in the literature of other countries to preserve the best fruits of the Enlightenment, if they consciously and conscientiously seek them.

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